

21 April 1972

MEMORANDUM FOR: Assistant Deputy Director for Intelligence

SUBJECT : Comments on Adams Memorandum, "The  
Communists' Combat Strength in Cambodia,"  
11 April 1972

1. The principal new issue probably is the 20,000 VC/NVA troops Sam judges to be missing from the combat OB. Part of this quantity (5,000) is attributed to units carried understrength. Sam provides no evidence on this, but we believe we have made adequate provision for unit strengths. (See comments on infiltration below.)

2. The larger portion of the difference (15,000) is based on his estimate that large numbers of battalion-size and smaller units are omitted from the OB. I would doubt that any omissions involve considerably fewer personnel than Sam suggests and, in any event, will have   take a look at the evidence, as he did at the time of Sam's attack on his KC estimate. 25X

3. I think Sam errs by not properly analyzing the structure and missions of various portions of the OB. For example, he shows quite an array of combat units (7 battalions and others) subordinate to MR C-20 where we don't carry any. Our analyst was inclined to the view that the evidence and logic pointed to a support role for C-20. Just today, a document showing one of Sam's missing combat battalions to be a transport unit arrived. Both C-10 and C-20 are likely support organizations given their areas of responsibility.

4. Aggregate numbers aside, Sam has also ignored the organizational structure of the Vietnamese Communist forces when he defines the NVA threat to South Vietnam from Cambodia on Page 2. This he quantifies as more than 75,000 composed of the 30,000-35,000 in our OB, his 20,000 add on, plus 25,000 of the infiltrators as though men deployed and fought in hoards rather than units. Whatever we might add to the OB from Sam's evidence on battalions and small units would not be a part of the mobile strike forces now attacking

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South Vietnam but local security forces protecting the rear. Sam provides no evidence at all that our estimates of these strike forces are not sound.

5. As far as the local and regional security functions, including the need to worry about FANK, are concerned, Sam exhibits a woefully inadequate treatment of the evidence and understanding of capabilities when he said that the KC "probably have more than enough men to mind the store in Cambodia, even if most VC/NVA soldiers cross the border." Out of their much needed resources, the VC/NVA have built a series of regional regimental structures to back up the local forces who are KC with some VC/NVA cadre. This we explain carefully in [ ] paper. Our treatment of the OB has been shown to be correct during the current offensive. The mobile strike forces we describe are the ones attacking; the regional and local forces are performing their security functions as expected.

6. The question of the impact on OB of infiltration groups sent to COSVN needs illumination. Adams suggests that 25,000 of the 38,000 troops estimated to be destined for COSVN are combat troops which should be added to the combat OB. Even if we accept the notion that 25,000 are combat troops, his assumption that all would be destined for Cambodia-based units ignores the fact that COSVN infiltrators are allocated not only to Cambodia but GVN MR's 3 and 4 as well. He also assumes that combat infiltrates should be immediately added to the OB -- in this case, even prior to the arrival of some of them. This ignores the dynamics of the OB and infiltration methodologies, the former developing ex post estimates and the latter ex ante prediction. Even after an infiltration group has arrived at its destination, it will not be counted in the combat OB unless it is part of a new organic unit. Some of the combat filler troops move fairly quickly into combat units to replace losses incurred during the previous dry season and some are held in recovery/replacement regiments to cover anticipated losses.

7. During the current dry season, nevertheless, we have already accounted for an increase of 10,000 in the Cambodia-based VC/NVA combat OB owing to infiltration. The deployment of the 271st Independent Regiment through the infiltration pipeline caused a 5,000 increase in the OB which was included in the OER paper. This rather "fat" increase for the regiment was partly intended to reflect additional regular group

infiltration. Since the paper was prepared, we have, in effect, increased the VC/NVA Cambodia OB by adding 5,000 to the GVN MR 3 OB to account for Cambodia-based forces deploying into South Vietnam -- without reducing the Cambodia OB. This was done to reflect the continuing high level of infiltration to COSVN. With 10,000 of these 25,000 already accounted for in the OB, the disposition of the remaining 15,000 is as yet unclear. Because of the high level of casualties in the current fighting, the 15,000 may well vanish as far as OB is concerned.

  
Chief  
South Vietnam Branch  
Indochina Division

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- What is the evidential basis for Sam's assertions?

Are his views based on facts?

What is the rebuttal to his position?

What is the substance of the issue?

Is there any new  
(or development) <sup>1</sup> ~~issue~~ that was not previously discussed when Hqs was engaged with Sam?